THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND—

THE last meeting of the session in London will take place at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C., on 4 April, and will take the form of a concert and recital. Mr. Bransby Williams, whose absence from the birthday celebration owing to his engagement at Liverpool was so much regretted, has kindly promised to give a selection from his famous impersonations of Dickens characters. This will be one of Mr. Bransby Williams's last appearances in London prior to his departure for America, where he has a long series of engagements to fulfil. He returns to England again in December next. On this occasion members will, of course, be admitted by showing their membership card. Tickets for non-members may be had of the Hon. Secretary at headquarters, price one shilling each.

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The Fellowship's appeal on behalf of the National Dickens Library scheme has received very influential support, and a special announcement will be made shortly. May we ask members of the Fellowship to help to their very utmost to carry out what is one of the most important undertakings the Fellowship has embarked upon? The establishment of a National Dickens Library in the heart of the city which Dickens so loved will be a fitting memorial to one whose work has recently justly been described as "the great prose epic of London, the Iliad of the work-a-day world."

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Another cherished belief is likely to be shattered shortly. At the first meeting of our new branch at Gravesend, one of the members challenged the statement that the house at Chalk on the main road at the corner of Thong Lane was the one Dickens spent his honeymoon in, and, which is really of more importance, wrote a portion of *Pickwick*. The house is known as the "Manor House," and has hitherto been accepted, on the authority of Laman Blanchard, as the house Dickens retired to with his wife in April, 1836, and has been pictured and photographed as such scores of times. There is now, however, some reason for thinking otherwise, and no doubt Mr. Mullender, who raised the question, will furnish proofs for his belief.

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The matter has created some excitement in the district, and already the local paper has set to work with Mr. Mullender, who resides in Chalk, to solve the question. It appears that the house at the time was occupied by M. Lereaux, a wealthy French surgeon, and his family, and that his gardener, Mr. Hills, is still alive, and stoutly denies that Dickens and his wife, or any other couple, came to lodge there during 1836 and 1837. Mr. Mullender's contention is that an old fashioned cottage on the north side of the road is the authentic house.

The tenant's name at the time was Craddock, and, curiously enough, when Mr. Pickwick was visiting Bath he lodged at a house the landlady of which bore the same name. We understand that evidence is being collected, and that we shall hear more on the subject. Mr. Mullender has also, we believe, discovered the forge Dickens had in his mind when describing the blacksmith's shop in *Great Expectations*.

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Some controversy has been appearing in the *Manchester Guardian* as to whether Dickens ever met the Grant Brothers. The Rev. W. Hume Elliot, when lecturing on the Cheeryble Brothers at the Manchester Branch meeting, preferred to take Dickens's words in the preface to *Nicholas Nickleby*, that he "never interchanged any communication" with them, as meaning he never met them. Evidence has now been brought to light by Mr. Ambler which conclusively proves that Dickens not only met them, but dined with them at the house of Mr. Gilbert Winter, and there seems little doubt that what Dickens really meant in the words referred to was, he had not "corresponded with them." Mr. Elliot's book on *The Cheeryble Brothers*, which we announced recently as coming, will shortly be published by Messrs. Sherratt and Hughes, of Manchester.

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A first edition of *Pickwick*, in twenty numbers, with the Buss plates and the notice of Seymour's death in No. 1, was the chief interest of the sale at Messrs. Sotheby's on 28 February. It fell to Mr. Quaritch for £118, so no "record" was created. A bound first edition of the same imperishable work brought £9 10s. *Oliver Twist*, in the ten original parts, illustrated by Cruikshank, with wrappers in a fine state, brought £14; while first editions of *Nicholas Nickleby*, in wrappers, brought only £4, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, slightly defective, £5 10s. The collection included many odd pieces of Dickens's work, such as *The Library of Fiction* and *The Village Coquettes*, but not, by the way, *The Strange Gentleman*.

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Now that the winter session is ended, members of the Fellowship will be looking forward to the summer rambles in Dickens-Land, and some announcements will be made shortly. Last year one of the most enjoyable trips was to Portsmouth. Several members then expressed a wish that the Council should arrange one to Bath this year. It is unnecessary to point out how replete Bath is in Dickensian associations, and such a trip would be delightful. But it could not be arranged unless the Council could rely upon a fairly large party. The railway fare would be 5s. 6d. for a day trip, and the total expenses would not exceed 8s. 6d. Will those who would make the trip kindly communicate with the Hon. General Secretary at headquarters at once? Unless a fairly large number of replies are received soon, the idea will have to be abandoned.

* * *

One of the subjects set at the Horbury Church Eisteddfod, decided on 22 February, was an "Essay on the character of Sam Weller." There were ten competitors, the prize winner being Mr. Robert Allbut, whose essay we are able to publish on another page. Two others, by Mr. J. W. Bolton and Miss M. J. Nicholls, were specially mentioned.

THE EDITOR.

SAM WELLER*

A CHARACTER SKETCH

By ROBERT ALLBUT

AUTHOR OF "RAMBLES IN DICKENS-LAND"

SEVENTY years since, on 31 March, 1836, the reading world delightedly welcomed the appearance of the first instalment of a new serial tale, and made the pleasant acquaintance of Mr. Pickwick and his *confrères*.

The increasing popular interest in this notable quartette was unexpectedly and materially enhanced by the introduction, in the fifth

SAM WELLER
From a drawing by Herbert Beecroft

number of the story, of the personality of Samuel Weller, boots at the "White Hart," High Street, Borough.

Then and thereafter was realized the important fact, that a star of the first magnitude, luminous and genial, had arisen on the literary horizon, and that a great master of English characterization and humour stood revealed for the "gaiety of nations," taking, once for all, a foremost place in the ranks of Victorian authorship.

Charles Dickens, in his many and varied portraitures of character, always did well; but in *The Pickwick Papers* he did Weller. The sprightly Sam, though "of the streets streety" (see the paternal reference in twentieth chapter), will always hold a special place in our remembrance and regard; not only by virtue of his shrewd observation, racy wit, and imperturbable good temper, but also in the consideration of his more sterling characteristics—faithfulness, self-abnegation, and magnanimity.

* This is the successful essay in the competition set by the Horbury Literary and Debating Society on 22 February.

Tracing Sam's history from the time previously indicated, we may remember his engagement in the service of his amiable employer, and his unhesitating alacrity of compliance with the terms proposed. His first Pickwickian journey is recorded in the thirteenth chapter, as taken to the "ancient, loyal, and patriotic Borough" of Eatanswill, whence, accompanied by his patron, he afterwards travelled to Bury St. Edmunds in the track of the redoubtable Jingle and his astute companion.

During the latter ride, described in chapter sixteen, we have Sam's first allusion to his early experience in the rough school of life, and his sentiments in respect of the seamy side of London existence. In this chapter we gain virtually our first acquaintance with his personal philosophy and optimism, and his chivalrous allegiance of sympathetic service in the interest of his new master.

Here may be noted his grateful willinghood, earnest determination, and thoroughness of purpose, enlivened by his good-tempered demeanour and embellished by his exuberant fun and humorous similitudes.

Previous to leaving the pleasant neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmunds, we come again into more direct association with our hero, and on 1 September, 1827, we have a specimen of his helpful handiness and energy, his quaint drollery, smart repartee, and anecdotal illustration.

In London he rescues his master from the doubtful game of legal "battledore and shuttlecock," and affords evidence of his "extensive and peculiar" knowledge of the metropolis. Mr. Tony Weller (*père*) is introduced, when information is furnished relative to the whereabouts of Jingle and Job Trotter, which information takes Mr. Pickwick and servant to Ipswich.

Events of various and romantic interest ensue, culminating in the discomfiture and exposure of those impudent and nefarious adventurers, —and in "the first passage of Mr. Weller's first love." In all these circumstances Sam improves on acquaintance, fully maintaining—*vi et armis*, when necessary—his sturdy attachment and unwavering fealty to his employer, dealing with men, incidents, and emergencies with genial tact and discretion.

Christmas at Dingley Dell pleasantly celebrated and past, Sam's memorable valentine written and dispatched, the far-famed trial—"Bardell *versus* Pickwick"—concluded, and the Pickwickian adventures and misadventures at Bath brought to a satisfactory termination, Mr. Pickwick is arrested on his return to London and incarcerated in the Fleet Prison.

At this point of the story we have the best instance of Sam's chivalrous self-sacrifice as he voluntarily becomes himself a prisoner, for the better service and protection of his benefactor. In the prison he meets on friendly terms his whilom antagonist, Job Trotter, "ragged and squalid," in attendance on the once versatile Jingle, now much reduced by hardship and ill-health, and saved from utter destitution by the charity of "the Governor." In reference to Mr. Pickwick, Job effusively remarks, "I could serve that gentleman till I fell down dead at his feet." Says Sam, firmly, "None o' that, young feller; no one serves him but me!"

We all remember with special pleasure the release of Mr. Pickwick from the Fleet, his subsequent journey to Bristol, and thence to Birmingham, prosecuting his friendly mission of mediation on behalf of Mr. Nathaniel Winkle and the black-eyed Arabella; the ever-thoughtful Sam being in constant and careful attendance to cheer, animate, and enliven with his kindly wit and inexhaustible resources.

SAM WELLER AT THE LEG OF MUTTON "SWARRY" AT BATH

One of the set of extra illustrations by Phiz, issued in 1847 in green wrapper

So onward to the closing chapter, where we find Sam still a bachelor (though two years previously urgently advised by Mr. Pickwick to marry his pretty *fiancée*), by reason of his unswerving devotion to the interest and comfort of his old friend. On the occasion referred to Sam emphatically speaks his mind and announces his *ultimatum*, whereby he "sticks to" his worthy patron—"come what come may."

In all this we may readily discern the dominant principles of Sam Weller's character and conduct—sterling conscientiousness, genuine gratitude, steadfast constancy, and faithful devotion. From these there

spring the secondary though more apparent attributes of diligence, gallantry, resolution, and joviality. Sam knew how to take hold of everyday experience by the right handle, and render life worth the living. He exemplified, as Sir John Lubbock has it, "the duty of being happy, as well as the happiness of doing our duty." He understood the wisdom of a straightforward and cheerful courage; how to make the best of his surroundings,

> "And frame the heart to mirth and merriment,
> Which bars a thousand harms."

Ever turning a bright face to his task, he did good service in circumstances of enterprise and difficulty. These better characteristics were at all times adorned by an original, though untutored method of racy illustration, the outcome of a blithe and vivacious spirit, combined with a fine-natured and keen sagacity.

The character of Sam may perhaps be considered as being, with some necessary modifications, a portraiture of his illustrious originator, Charles Dickens himself. Unconsciously, it may be, the "inimitable" author has turned an introspective eye on his own heart in the drawing, and has thus given to "the world assurance of a man."

Alertness of observation and penetrating insight, genial eccentricity of humour and frank enjoyment of the brightness and gladsomeness of life, may be considered as belonging to Sam Weller and his delineator alike. Also, and better still, in regard to earnestness of purpose, thoroughness of sympathy, and cordiality of good feeling, Samuel and his kindly biographer similarly occupy a unique position in our heart's affection and esteem. In both personalities there has existed a magnetic power of attraction which has irresistibly appealed to the universal heart of humanity, among all sorts and conditions of men.

Thus by the contemplation of character attaching to the best-known offspring of his noble fancy are we brought back to the ever-welcome theme of the genius of England's favourite author. To his memory we would reverently record our sincere, affectionate, and unaffected homage, endorsing, with special emphasis in this connexion, his later quotation of the old song—

> "'Tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love
> That makes the world go round."

IMPROMPTU

"SOME wit, unable to resist the temptation of putting a quotation from Virgil into an epigram, and not unwilling, perhaps, to have a sly hit at his late colleague in 'the gallery,' wrote as follows:—

> "'Oh, Dickens, dear,
> I sadly fear
> That great will be our loss
> When we shall say—
> Alas, the day!—
> Procumbit humi Boz.'"

Dr. Mackenzie's Life of Charles Dickens.
Philadelphia (1870).

DICKENS AND CHRISTIANITY

A MEDITATION IN "POETS' CORNER"

By the Rev. W. A. C. CHEVALIER

HAVING an hour or two to spare one morning—it was in July, and the meridian heat intense, I went into the cool shadows, and among the "shades" of Westminster Abbey. I made my way at once to Poets' Corner and to the spot where the mortal remains of Dickens lie. There, under the brass-lettered stone, they repose with the simple inscription, "Charles Dickens. Born February the Seventh, 1812. Died June the Ninth, 1870." What a fitting resting-place for him who was such a favourite child of Fancy!—surrounded by memorials of those who were greatest in both the arts he loved so well. Next to him Richard Cumberland, dramatist; at his feet David Garrick and Samuel Johnson; while the monument of Mrs. Pritchard, actress, looks down upon his grave. Facing it, on both sides respectively, are Roubiliac's noble monument of Handel, the master of musicians; and the well-known statue of Shakespeare, with the scroll and the books, together with those of Chaucer, Dryden, Addison, Rowe; Thackeray, his own contemporary, and others great in the literature to which Dickens contributed so large a share, and left so rich a legacy. What a galaxy of departed genius! What a sacred spot! Let no one venture to assert that this was not a fitting place for the ashes of Charles Dickens to repose in, because he was not, in the common sense of the word, a religious man. It must be granted, indeed, that he did not often sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" in church; but, good fellow Churchmen, his religion was more uncommon, for he sang them in his heart, and he sang them in his beautiful prose idylls to the glory of God and to the great comfort and relief of the people of God. Moreover, I do verily believe that they were acceptable to Him, as a "reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice," and I further believe that as a weekday preacher Charles Dickens touched more hearts and ameliorated more lives, than half the pulpits in the land on any given Sunday. And just because he preached the Gospel of Christ in its practical simplicity, after the example of the Great Master Himself; and with very little human theology and certainly no "higher criticism," for Christ's interpretation of the Scriptures was high enough for him. Charles Dickens was a religious man, though he had not much faith in 'isms. And so we find David Garrick was right after all. It is because actors and authors, if they be true artists, represent their poetic fictions as though they were realities that they succeed in touching the hearts of their audience; and it is equally because some preachers speak of the eternal verities as though they were fictions that they fail in affecting their hearers. Dickens spoke of eternal truths as realities in which he believed, believed with all his heart; but he would not accept any man's interpretation of them.

In "Poets' Corner," very near the grave of Charles Dickens, there is a mural tablet to the memory of Gay, the author of the *Beggar's Opera*. There now, some of my religious critics may have some cause to complain and put up their hands and protest. For, you see, poor Gay

declared himself an unbeliever in the eternal verities by that miserable couplet inscribed on his tablet--

> "Life is a jest, and all things show it :
> I thought so once, but now I know it."

Well, if that is to be taken seriously, it is surely a very sad thing—a melancholy jest indeed. But we would prefer to take it as a mere ebullition of unreflecting wit, and an instance of the ruling passion, strong in death, of which we have many other instances—in which the better feelings of our nature do not share. Dickens, on the other hand, always felt and showed, what even Gay in his heart must have known, that life is a very serious thing, and the more serious to those who think lightly of its responsibilities, and do not try to improve its opportunities for "making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and thus prove not only unfaithful, but unwise stewards. Dickens felt and set forth, in all his works, what Longfellow so finely expressed in his "Psalm of Life"—

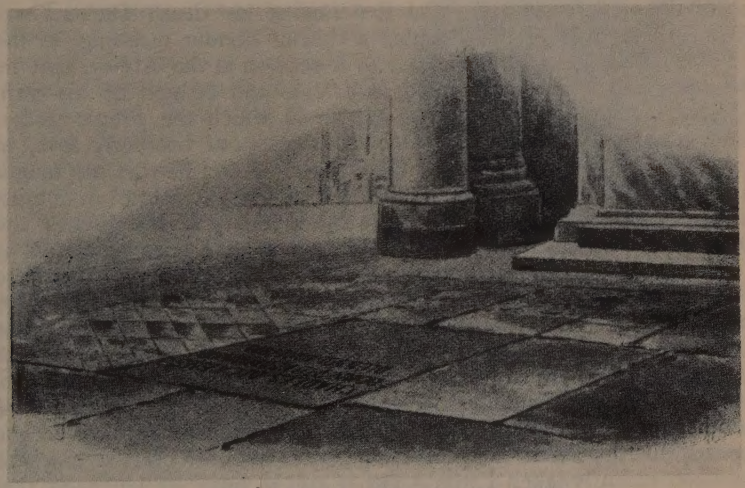
> "Life is real, life is earnest,
> And the grave is not its goal ;
> 'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
> Was not written of the soul."

It is evident in all his life and work that Dickens had a strong religious bias, spite of his anti-clericalism. Yet he did not for all that satirize or mock the faithful clergy or true piety in any form, however much the laxity of the Church in his day distressed him. Wherever he found faith, earnestness, and zeal among its ministers, as in the case of the Minor Canon of Rochester, in *Edwin Drood*, he recognized and "magnified them." And surely the true Christian spirit breathes in such utterances as those in a letter to his youngest son, saying "that he was to do to others what he would that they should do to him, without being discouraged if they did not do it." "All things," he wrote, "must be done on their own account and for their own sake, and without the least reference to any gratitude. As to gratitude, as I have often remarked to you, one does a generous thing because it is right, and not for any response it is to awaken in others." This rule, in another form, frequently appears in his letters, and it was enforced in many ways upon those who were dear to him. "Nothing," said he in a comment on a regret that a noble action had not met with its expected reward—"Nothing of what is nobly done can ever be lost." And what could have been better or more Christian counsel than that to his youngest son on his departure to Australia, "Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes in duty—it is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour than that you should. . . . I put a New Testament among your books, for the very same reasons and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided." In the same letter he adds in conclusion, "I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian

religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. . . . Only one word more on this head . . . Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it."

Who shall say that this is not practical religion, or that Dickens was not a religious man? And as Mr. Forster declares—"They who knew Dickens best will know that every word there is written from his heart, and is radiant with the truth of his nature."

Another testimony to the real religion of Dickens (and please to remember that whatever binds us to God is religion in its proper sense) came to my mind as I sat meditating on that July morning in "Poets' Corner." It was a hymn that he wrote in his Christmas tale, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, about which a clergyman wrote to him.



POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

"I beg to thank you," Dickens wrote in reply, "for your very acceptable letter, not the less gratifying to me because I am myself the writer you refer to. . . . There cannot be many men, I believe, who have a more humble veneration for the New Testament, or a more profound conviction of its all-sufficiency, than I have. If I am ever (as you tell me I am) mistaken on the subject, it is because . . . my observation of life induces me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror these unseemly squabbles about the 'letter' which drive the 'Spirit' out of hundreds of thousands."

In similar tone, to a reader of *Edwin Drood* who had pointed out to him that his use as a figure of speech of a line from the Bible in the tenth chapter might be subject to misconstruction, he wrote from Gadshill only the day before his death: "I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour; because I feel it, and because I rewrote that history for my children,

every one of whom knew it from having it repeated to them, long before they could read and almost as soon as they could speak; but I have never made proclamation of this from the housetops."

And if any other testimony were wanted it would assuredly be found in the purity of his writings, in that he uttered nothing base. What Wordsworth said of his works Dickens might have said with equal truth of his own: "I am not at all desirous that any one should write a critique on my poems. If they be from above, they will do their own work in course of time; if not, they will perish as they ought." Dickens certainly had a high purpose and a distinctly moral aim in all his books—it was his hope that they might help to make people better and their lives happier. It was this faith and hope that so garrisoned his heart, and guarded his work from baseness, that as his friend and biographer said, "There is scarcely a page of the thousands he has written which might not be put into the hands of a little child." In one of the newspaper notices at the time of his death Dickens was called an "Apostle of the People," a title of honour meaning, as the Bishop of Manchester pointed out in a sermon at the Abbey, that he had a mission which he fulfilled in a style and fashion of his own, a gospel message, bright, joyous, gladsome, which the people understood . . . for it was the gospel of kindliness, of brotherly love, of sympathy, in the widest sense of the word . . . and he who has taught us our duty to our fellow-men better than we knew it before . . . must be regarded, by those who recognize the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit, as a teacher sent from God. He would have been welcomed as a fellow-labourer in the common interests of humanity by Him Who asked the question, "If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?" Words of high praise from a dignitary of the Church, but they do not go a whit beyond the truth—and they were emphasized from the same pulpit by the Dean of the cathedral, who closed his sermon with these few words: "To another great humorist who lies in this church the words have been applied, that his death 'eclipsed the gaiety of nations.' But of him who has been recently taken I would rather say, in humbler language, that no one was ever so much beloved or so much mourned."

It was proved by the concourse that flocked to his grave on the day of interment, and all the following day—crowds of all sorts and conditions of men. "All day long," as the good Dean wrote, "there was a constant pressure to the spot, and many flowers were strewn upon it by unknown hands, many tears shed from unknown eyes."

What more need I add? I have made my pilgrimage; I have written my simple chronicle, and I humbly lay it—with all its faults and unworthiness—as a loving tribute on the grave of our common benefactor, Charles Dickens.

"I HAVE very grave doubts whether a great commercial country, holding communications with all parts of the world, can better Christianize the benighted portions of it than by the bestowal of its wealth and energy on the making of good Christians at home and the utter removal of neglected and untaught childhood from its streets before it wanders abroad."—*Letter of Dickens.*

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER TO MR. FRANK SPEAIGHT

"TO this skilful showman, who has so often delighted us, and who has charmed us again to-night, we have now to wish God-speed, and that he may continue for many years to exercise his potent art," was the quotation from a speech of Dickens on the toast list against that of "Our Guest" at the complimentary dinner given to Mr. Frank Speaight on 3 March, at Seyd's Hotel, Finsbury Square, E.C.

That sentiment was echoed by the large company of members and friends of the Fellowship who assembled to wish Mr. Speaight a safe voyage to and success in America, to which country he sailed on 27 March to fulfil a recital tour. Mr. Arthur Waugh presided.

MR. FRANK SPEAIGHT

In proposing "The Dickens Fellowship," Mr. W. Teignmouth Shore thought that perhaps they had devoted a little too much time to talking and too little time to doing. At the monthly meetings it struck him that they dealt with Dickens as an artist instead of as a man, as a humanitarian, and the value of those meetings would be increased if they were occasionally to have two speakers instead of one, who might deal from two points of view with some of the larger subjects about which Dickens wrote—about some subjects dealing with the welfare of those whose welfare he had so much at heart. Mr. Shore defined the philosophy of Dickens as that of the open eye, the open heart, and the open hand. The Fellowship should do its best to act up to that philosophy. By so doing they would be raising a true memorial to him who did more than any other English writer in the cause of humanity. Then, asked what the Fellowship was doing, they could reply, "We are trying to go about the world with an eye open to pity and to sorrow, with an open heart feeling for humanity, and with a hand ready to give good service."

Mr. Sidney Marriott and Mr. J. W. T. Ley responded, and both echoed Mr. Shore's desire that the serious side of the Fellowship should ever be kept uppermost. They spoke of the good work done—of the 7000 meals to London's starving children, of the entertainments to the poor in the East End of London, and of the splendid work of the Needlework and Charitable Guild. They also referred to the National Dickens Library Fund, and referred, too, to the new scheme of founding a Dickens Fellowship Convalescent Home for Children, and to the success of *The Dickensian*.

The Chairman, in submitting the toast of the evening, "Our Guest," reminded his hearers of the many pleasant evenings they had spent in Mr. Speaight's company. It was not possible, he said, to overestimate the art that went to one of Mr. Speaight's recitals. In it the genius of

Dickens lived again. Mr. Waugh also spoke of Mr. Speaight's continued good and generous services to the Fellowship, and wished him every possible success in the future. He concluded with the following:—

> All hail to the vessel that carries our Speaight,
> With favouring breezes to fan;
> While the beauties of Yankeeland worship elate
> The orator, author, and man.

Mr. Speaight, who was given a very hearty reception, said it was needless to tell how gratified he was at the honour and compliment paid to him. Whatever he had done for the Fellowship had been done with real pleasure, and he was more than repaid for all his efforts by the knowledge that those efforts were appreciated. He spoke of the labour that went to one of his recitals, and remarked that in adapting a book he never put in a word that Dickens had not written, and had spent as much as twelve hours trying to fit one sentence into another without adding so much as a verb or conjunction of his own. He was sure that much of his success had been due to the encouragement he had received from letters of appreciation from the late Mr. F. G. Kitton, from Mr. Arthur Waugh, and others, whilst it was a letter from Mr. Matz that had finally decided him to "go in for Dickens." What little experience he had had showed that Dickens was the most suitable author for platform delineation. He thought that the greatness of Dickens lay in the fact that he struck straight at the heart. Thanking the company for their good wishes, he said that he would do in America as he had always done in England—his best.

"The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens" was proposed by Mr. Robert Allbut in a delightful speech. Dickens was, he said, a universal friend. His generous humour, and his true pathos, his power of delineation and description, with the curious delicacy of thought and feeling, had won him that position. It was not too much to say that wherever the English tongue was spoken, and the Anglo-Saxon hearts were beating, his memory would be held in reverence and his books would always be found treasured as household words by many. The mingled woof of men's everyday society, the tragedies and comedies of the fireside, were the materials with which he worked. His heart was always in the right place—ever ready to rejoice with those who rejoiced, to weep with those who wept, to sympathize with and weep for the poor and oppressed, to compassionate and suffer with all. This was the greatest and best element of his genius, the source of the genuine humour and true pathos which ever characterized and immortalized his writings. The true Christian spirit—practical right-doing between man and man, goodwill towards everybody, charity, forbearance, forgiveness, and love, the mottoes of the Temple: "Do as ye would be done by, forgive and forget"—these were the dominant keynotes of Dickens's lifelong song.

The toast list concluded with "The Ladies," proposed by Mr. B. W. Matz, and "The Chairman," proposed by Mr. H. Snowden Ward, and drunk with heartiness.

During the evening, Miss Winifred Siddons delighted the gathering with several songs, whilst Mr. Bret Hayden gave two or three humorous songs, and Mr. Frank Speaight was at his best in a couple of recitations.

A special word of praise must be given to Mr. J. W. T. Ley for the very clever menu card and toast list. To each item on it was given an ingeniously appropriate quotation from the writings of Dickens, and it will be greatly prized by those who are fortunate enough to possess a copy. We believe a few remain, and can be had at headquarters at one shilling each.

THE MACHINIST WHO KNEW DICKENS

By C. WILKINS

IMAGINATION, which not infrequently revels in the editorial and sub-editorial rooms of a newspaper, is sometimes exercised also in the subterranean amongst the machinists. I remember upon one occasion, when a "reading" of the master's was announced at Swansea, we all of the *Daily Leader* staff rubbed up our Dickensiana diligently, and the man who had enjoyed a night with the creator of Pickwick was regarded with favour. I was one of the provincial contributors to our daily, and was at the head office one day talking of the coming treat when the sub-editor said, "Do you know that we have a machinist who knew Dickens intimately?" I looked my pleasure, and soon had the satisfaction of a chat with the worthy. "Knew him?" he said. "Yes, I knew him well. No stand-offishness about him. He would drop in sometimes at 'The Corner,' and when he knew we were all on the same paper as he wrote in, he passed a kind word, yes, and more, and not a few pewters have Charles and I looked down into, he standing treat one time and I another." It afterwards came to light that the machinist was engaged in doing some repairs to a fine new press at an office with which Charles Dickens was connected, and while the men were busy upon the leviathan he was brought into the room to see it by one of the proprietors, and in his usual kind spirit gave the workmen some silver to "get a pewter or two," and this reference to Barclay and Perkins' usual medium for imbibing stout was the peg upon which the machinist hung his recollection. I see the man mentally now, with a look of imaginary reminiscence. "Knew him; yes, I knew him well." Alas, poor Yorick; the machinist never lived to see the day that I did, when Westminster Abbey received one of its immortals.

SYDNEY CARTON

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."
ST. JOHN XV. 13.

"NO greater deed to man doth glory give
Than life laid down so that his friend may live."
Behold him standing on the scaffold stair;
He scans the future, while his features wear
A radiant smile; he sees *her* children dear
Surround his lowly grave, their voices clear
Lisp his loved name, while she for whom he dies
Looks on the grassy mound with tearful eyes.
Unselfish soul; what blest reward is thine!
A martyr's crown awaits the deed divine! HENRY KNIGHT.

AN AMUSING DICKENS LETTER

A LETTER written by Charles Dickens to Behnes, the sculptor, on 11 June, 1855, in Dickens's own whimsical vein, was sold at Christie's sale rooms last month.

Dickens, it appears, had promised to sit to Behnes for a marble bust, but did not keep the appointment, and, fearing the sculptor might be annoyed, wrote him this letter:

Left his home
On the evening of Tuesday the Thirtieth of April last
A remarkable Dog
Answering to the name of
BOZ

He had on at the time a white collar marked with the initials "C. D." (in marking ink), and was last seen, in company with some other dogs, lying on the banks of the Thames at Richmond. He is decidedly a Setter, and the property of Mr. Behnes, of Osnaburgh Street, Regent's Park. He has been traced to Elm Cottage, Petersham, Surrey, where it appears probable he will remain until the end of the summer. This is to give notice that if he be not restored to his owner by the 24th of this present month (up to which time he will be perpetually engaged, it is supposed, in a monthly fit of barking to which he is unfortunately subject), the aforesaid Mr. Behnes will himself repair to Petersham on the finest morning he can select and claim his property. Knives and forks have been seen in very suspicious attitudes on the premises, and there is strong reason to believe that the animal is fed on

Joints, roast or boiled,
Every day
at
Half-past four.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XVI

AN ACROSTIC

C herished thy memory will ever be;
H ow many hearts, alas, have mourned for thee!
A h! may their *loss* be thy *eternal* gain;
R egret is useless, sorrow all in vain;
L ost is thy voice, like some departed strain.
E ngland may well be proud, and justly boast,
S uch men as thee are in themselves a host.
D ickens, thy very name's a household word,
I n distant foreign countries even heard;
C lear-sighted, honest, loving, just and true,
K ind-hearted, witty, and pathetic too;
E yes weep, hearts bleed, at thy inspired command,
N one could thy *pathos* ever yet withstand;
S ave Shakespeare, thou wert greatest in the land.

CHARLES KENT.

DICKENS AS STAGE MANAGER

By FRANCESCO BERGER

I KNEW Charles Dickens in the fifties, and mainly through my connexion with his amateur theatricals. He was a great actor. His taste lay, I think, in the direction of *melodrama* and light comedy, and had he devoted himself to the stage as a profession, he would probably have achieved the same success there as he did in another sphere.

Among those whom he had gathered around him for these amateur performances he was always called "The Manager," and what a wonderful manager he was! He insisted upon very many and very accurate rehearsings. I think we rehearsed *The Frozen Deep* every Monday and Thursday evening for many weeks, if not several months, and every grouping of personages on the stage was carefully reviewed and corrected from the front by men with such artistic eyes as Stanford and Telbin, so that a succession of tableaux was presented, each complete and in perfect artistic keeping.

But this "thoroughness" was one of his most prominent characteristics. I know no word that more accurately sums up the man Dickens than "thorough." When once he had taken up a cause of charity, or the affairs of a man, he worked at it with his whole might, his whole energy, his whole soul, sparing neither expense of money nor bodily fatigue.

Considering how distinguished was his social standing and how far-reaching his personal influence, he was a *modest* man. He might over and over again have sat in the Commons for this or that constituency; his sovereign (Queen Victoria) would have knighted him at any moment.

PICKWICK EXAMINATION. QUESTION No. 4

We have had inquiries as to how we arrived at the answer to the above question in the Pickwick examination. Although it is not wise, as a rule, to enter into correspondence regarding competitions, we feel it only fair to comply with the request on this occasion. In the earlier editions of *Pickwick* there was published a statement of *errata* specifying as follows:—

"Page 185, line 25, for 1830 read 1827. Page 202, line 30, for 1830 read 1827."

We therefore understand that the date of Dodson and Fogg's notice was given in error, and need not now come into consideration.

The action of the tale may be summarized as below:—

13 May, 1827. Pickwickian adventures commence. Chap. 2.
Christmas, 1827. Second visit to Dingley Dell. Chap. 28.
14 February, 1828. Trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick. Chap. 34.
3 June, 1828. Trinity term commences. Chap. 40 (*as per Almanack*).
13 June, 1828. Arrest of Mr. Pickwick. Chap. 34.
27 July, 1829. Release of Mr. P. from the Fleet. Chaps. 46–7.
Allow August, September and October for chaps. 48–56.
November, 1829. Dinner at Dulwich. Chap. 57. *Total period 2½ years.*

27 July, 1829, is the *crux* of the question. It is evident that the author *intended* to make the term of Mr. P.'s imprisonment about three months (chaps. 45 and 47), proposing to bring the time of his release to end of July, *1828;* but in that case—following the indications of the story—the actual period of his detention could not have exceeded *six weeks!* This is an obvious anachronism; and we must therefore adopt the date above given (July, 1829) as the solution of the dilemma.

At the final dinner party (chap. 57), Mr. Pickwick speaks of his active connexion with the Club during "the greater part of two years"; of course, not including the term of his enforced retirement therefrom, or a reference, it may be, is here suggested to the serial publication—occupying twenty months—of the Pickwickian history.

AN EXAMINATION IN DICKENS'S WORKS

DURING the present year we are setting as a competition a series of examination papers on certain of the works of Dickens. There will be twenty questions for each issue of *The Dickensian*, devoted to one book each month. We offer six prizes for the best answers to the complete set of twelve papers as follows :—

1st Prize : A complete set of the Fireside Edition of the works of Dickens, 22 volumes.

2nd Prize : *The Real Dickens Land*, by H. Snowden Ward.

3rd Prize : *The Dickens Country*, by F. G. Kitton.

4th, 5th, 6th Prizes : *Rambles in Dickens Land*, by Robert Allbut.

All answers, with the chapter of the book given, should be sent in on foolscap paper (on one side only) bearing the heading of the particular examination paper. Do not repeat the questions, but simply number the answers to tally with the questions.

The answers should be addressed to the Editor of *The Dickensian*, at Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, W.C., marked "EXAMINATION," and must be forwarded *to reach that address by the 18th of each month.*

The correct answers will appear in the following issue, and the names of the leading competitors, with the number of marks their papers have earned. The prizes will be allotted at the end of the year.

The adjudicators are Mr. Robert Allbut, Mr. J. W. T. Ley, and the Editor, the decision of whom will be final.

IV—THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

1. In what several respects may a certain moral attribute be compared to an inner garment?
2. What was the longest poetical quotation given by Dick Swiveller?—from what author and book?
3. Give reference to a writer whose Christian name may be correctly spelt in the reverse order of its orthography.
4. What anomaly of conduct may be presented by members of the three learned professions?
5. In what connexion did a lawyer's clerk desire a diminution of the feline species?
6. Furnish allusions to Eldorado, Covent Garden Market, and Long Acre.
7. What circumstance inclined a public character to sentiments of infidelity?
8. What was the usual name applied by Miss Sally Brass to the small servant at Bevis Marks?
9. He was a fair pedestrian: but there was a district into which he was unwilling to proceed. Furnish explanation.
10. What was the real name of Short, Thomas Codlin's partner?
11. Who was Mrs. Green, and where did she reside?
12. Quote several instances where "*angels*" are mentioned in this book.
13. Give the names bestowed in error on Mr. Swiveller on two occasions by different persons.
14. Refer to sentence (twelve words) containing a grand synonym for the morning sunshine of summer.
15. Who was Pedro?
16. Under what circumstances of personal disadvantage did he appear in society?
17. Quote allusions to two familiar names, writers of the old school—naturalist and poet.
18. Give character sketch—50 words—of Mr. Richard Swiveller.
19. Specify mention of a troubadour, and of the mountains of Wales.
20. Also of the Muse of Tragedy and two ancient cities famed in story.

RESULT OF COMPETITION III

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

THERE is still a keen interest in the competitions, as shown by the papers sent in. Miss W. M. Nash's excellent paper has taken her from the fourth place to the first, whilst Mrs. E. M. Hill has leapt from tenth place to second. As will be seen from the list published below, the other four leading competitors are close together. We give only the first six, and shall so continue until the end. But all those who have entered have done so well that the list is likely to alter each month.

III—NICHOLAS NICKLEBY—ANSWERS

1. "A double-bladed knife with a corkscrew." See letter from "*Mobbs's mother-in-law*" (Chap. 8).
2. In regard to Mr. Gregsbury, M.P., before and after election :—"Then he was *all milk and honey*; now he was *all starch and vinegar*" (Chap. 16).
3. The Siamese Twins (Chap. 21), Miss Biffin (Chap. 37), Cock Lane Ghost (Chap. 49), Jupiter (Chap. 29), Hamlet (Chap. 24), Daniel Lambert (Chap. 37).
4. *Total number—30.* List for reference retained by Editor.
5. At the last meeting of Nicholas and the Crummles's; "*the Phenomenon*" being dressed in "*a blue gauze frock, and trousers of the same*" (Chap 48).
6. In conversation with Kate, Mrs. Nickleby remarked that her husband could never bear the sight of *roasting pigs*, and "he had a horror of *little babies* too" (Chap. 41).
7. "Such book-keeping" may prove serviceable "in the one respect of sparing the Recording Angel some time and labour." *See first paragraph* (Chap. 44).
8. Mr. Squeers's illustrative definition of "*philosophy*" (Chap. 57) is too lengthy for insertion.
9. *Mr. Mantalini*, whose wife offered him an annual allowance of £120 (Chap. 34). Nicholas was engaged by Messrs. Cheeryble, at a salary of similar amount (Chap. 35).
10. Party at *Eel Pie Island* (Chap 52). List of (79) *Metropolitan Localities* retained for reference by Editor.
11. In "The Five Sisters of York" (Chap. 6)—quotation from the Ninetieth Psalm—"*as a tale that is told.*" Also after reference in same chapter to "*the waters of Lethe.*"
12. *Three;* viz. the speculation of "insuring his life," and the speculation of "christening his eldest son after his uncle," by Mr. Godfrey Nickleby. Also the speculation by which Mr. Nicholas Nickleby, sen., was ultimately ruined (Chap. 1).
13. Infection of deference paid to the lady by "*the box-passenger*" (Chap. 6). "Nothing so contagious as pure openness of heart. Nicholas *took the infection instantly*" (Chap. 35). *St. Anthony's fire* (Chap. 18). *Erysipelas* (Chap. 44).
14. Total number 25. List of *provincial towns* retained by Editor.
15. *Herself.* "The worst used and the most to be pitied" (Chap. 10).
16. "Needs must when somebody" (*the Devil*) "drives" (Chap. 5).
17. Character Sketch.
18. "*Both the Miss Dowdles*" (Chap. 26).
19. On encounter with Smike, Squeers remarked "*Damn the expense*, let's have him in a coach!" (Chap. 38).
20. "*Tim—must sow his wild oats,*" said Mr. Edward Cheeryble (Chap. 63).

THE SIX LEADING COMPETITORS

Miss W. M. Nash . . .	723	Mr. C. G. Price . . .	664
Mrs. E. M. Hill . . .	690	Mr. F. G. Grunwell . . .	659
Miss M. M. Fowler . . .	674	Miss F. Innocent . . .	652

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

LONDON

ONE of the most interesting meetings yet held in connexion with the Fellowship took place on 7 March, at Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, when Mr. J. Cuming Walters delivered his lecture on "Dickens as a Mystery Maker, with Special Reference to *Edwin Drood*." The chair was occupied by Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., the illustrator of the half-told tale, and he was supported by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Mr. Henry Smetham (Rochester), Mr. Richard Dovey (Brighton), and others. Mr. Cuming Walters's address was a finely reasoned, ingenious, and lucid exposition of his views on the subject, and was listened to with keen attention by a crowded meeting. In the course of his remarks, he said that this famous work of Charles Dickens dealt with a period when plots, as people now understood them, were left to the dramatist rather than to the novelist. He proceeded to argue that the mystery of *Edwin Drood* lay not in the question whether the hero was dead, for it could be proved in many ways that he was dead, but in the manner in which the murder would be detected. That brought him to the Datchery theory, with regard to which he endeavoured to show in a seemingly convincing manner that no other character would fit the part of Datchery but Helena Landless. After his address a discussion followed.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton gave one of his characteristic speeches, full of ingenious arguments and witty sallies, in the course of which he said that the difficulty in this mystery, as in others, was the distinguishing of "clues" and "blinds." It was certainly true that great stress was laid in the book upon the readiness for wild exploits which Helena Landless exhibited, and he did not deny Mr. Walters's theory that she was Datchery, but they must know how far they were going on the line of clues. Mr. Walters seemed to very much underrate the degree of the mystery. If Helena Landless was Datchery, would Dickens not have given her a comic touch to make her like Datchery? The discussion was continued by Mr. H. Smetham, who thought that Tartar was Datchery, Mr. Davey and others.

Mr. Luke Fildes, referring to the pictorial cover of the weekly parts of *Edwin Drood*, said that Mr. Charles Collins, who made the drawings, told him that when he (Mr. Collins) drew them he did so without knowing what they meant, and solely at Dickens's direction. He hoped that the mystery of *Edwin Drood* would never be elucidated, for if it were solved there would be an end of the intellectual benefits they derived from a discussion such as they had had that night.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP DRAMATIC CLUB

WE are pleased to announce that the next performance has been arranged for Saturday, 12 May, at the Cripplegate Institute, E.C. The play chosen is *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and every London member of the Fellowship should make a point of applying early for seats. This will be the final performance of the season, and it is hoped that the Dramatic Club will have sufficient funds in hand at the end to enable the Committee to hand over a substantial donation to the charitable objects promoted by the Fellowship. But this result can only be obtained by every member purchasing a ticket. There will be increased accommodation at 1s.; the whole of the balcony will be reserved at 2s. 6d.; whilst the stalls will be 5s. and 2s. 6d., also reserved.

The cast will consist of Mrs. J. T. Grein, Miss K. Marriott, Mrs. Teignmouth Shore, Messrs. H. Couch, A. E. Brookes-Cross, Percy Merriman, A. Turner Richardson, and W. Teignmouth Shore.

Tickets will be ready in the course of a few days, and can be obtained from headquarters, or from the Hon. Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club, Walter Dexter, 40 Ommaney Road, New Cross, S.E.

NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD

THE "Old Folks' Tea" will take place on Saturday, 28 April, at 6 p.m., at St. John's Parish Hall, Vartry Road, Stamford Hill, N. (by kind permission of the Rev. J. Lenthal Davids). The Hon. Secretary has received several offers of help, but as there will be many guests, she will be glad to hear from more who will assist in carving, waiting, or entertaining with amusing songs or recitations. Will all helpers kindly be in their places by four o'clock? Gentlemen will greatly assist by supplying their own carvers.

BIRMINGHAM AND DISTRICT BRANCH

AT a meeting held at the Great Western Hotel, on 23 February, under the chairmanship of Mr. E. J. Timings, an excellent address was given by Mr. Tidmarsh on *Oliver Twist*. There was a large gathering, and the audience was very demonstrative. Mr. Tidmarsh said that there was an evidence here and there that Dickens had hesitated in the destination and conclusion of some of his characters, also there were many of Dickens's characters that bore a great resemblance to one another, i.e. in type, such as Oliver Twist and Little Nell, and he thought there was also a touch of exaggeration here and there.

On *Oliver Twist* night, 16 March, the discussion was opened by Mr. S. B. Askew with a paper commenting upon the object for which the book was written. Some of the women characters were criticized by the speaker, and he said he was sorry that Charles Dickens did not permit Nancy to exercise a great influence for good over Sikes.

Mr. Frank Yoxall believed Nancy to be one of the noblest of Dickens's women characters, and he admired her sacrifice in loyally sticking to the man she hoped to win to a better life. Mr. G. T. Davis and others also entered into the discussion.

Miss Bocker and Mr. A. O. Purnell gave readings, and Mr. W. E. Oakley criticized the recent dramatized version of the book.

BLACKHEATH, LEE, AND LEWISHAM BRANCH

ON Monday evening, 19 February, Miss Edith E. Sayers read a paper on "Dickens's Business Women" at the Obelisk Hall, Lewisham, Mr. J. W. Lickis occupying the chair. Miss Sayers commenced by saying that many people have an idea that all Dickensian heroines are simply fainting-fits in frocks, all ringlets and resignation, but she proved the fallacy of that idea long before her paper was ended. During the evening Miss Katherina Brüll delighted her audience with two musical sketches written by Edith E. Sayers. On 12 February an enjoyable evening was spent at the "Trafalgar," Greenwich, by members and friends of the branch. After dinner had been partaken of and some interesting speeches made, the company adjourned to music, dancing, and whist.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

MR. HENRY DAVEY, President of the Brighton Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, invited the council of the branch to a "swarry" at Booth's Restaurant, which took place on 3 March, and was most successful. Mr. Davey, under the name of Mr. Pickwick, took the chair, and was supported by Sairey Gamp (Mrs. Hansor) and the Marchioness (Miss M. Russell-Davies); while the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Colin Covell, was Vice-Chairman as Sam Weller, and was supported by Agnes (Secretary of the Needlework Guild) and Quilp (Mr. Bristow). The Chairman proposed, at length, "The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens." Among the other toasts were "The Ladies," proposed by Mr. Bartlett and responded to by Mrs. Pennifold, and the host's health was drunk with enthusiasm. Some capital recitations followed by Miss Russell-Davies, Mr. Fowler, and Mr. Gauntlett.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON DICKENS SOCIETY (AFFILIATED)

At the meeting held on 21 February at the C.M.S. Hall, Mr. Theo. Jones read a paper on *Great Expectations*. After giving a brief synopsis of the story, he dealt in detail with the chief scenes and characters, finally placing on Joe Gargery "the crown of their regard," and characterizing him as one of Nature's noblemen. During the evening an appeal was made on behalf of the National Dickens Library.

BRIXTON BRANCH

On Monday evening, 12 March, a meeting was held in the Ladies' Parlour of Brixton Independent Church, Mr. R. Allbut in the chair. The programme was arranged by Mr. J. S. Baines, and included two Pickwickian recitals by that gentleman—"Bob Sawyer's Party" and "Sam Weller's Valentine." Mr. J. Cartwright (of Hammersmith) gave an excellent reading of "Mr. Bumble's Courtship" from *Oliver Twist*, and the Chairman offered some remarks on the memory of Dickens. The musical part of the programme was well sustained, several songs being effectively rendered during the evening by Mrs. Chapman and Messrs Chapman and Drake. Some observations were made by Messrs. S. Marriott, Skeen, and W. S. Walker, bringing a very delightful evening to a happy termination at 9.45. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to those friends who had so ably assisted as above. The next meeting of the branch was announced for 2 April, the engagements for the same being under the superintendence of Mr. J. Skeen.

CHESTER (PENNSYLVANIA) BRANCH

The celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Dickens took place on 7 February with a banquet, many of the members attending being dressed in Dickens character. One member's "get-up," it is reported, was "fetching," whilst another was "gorgeous in her old-time frock and bonnet," and was "the personification of Madame Jarley." The evening was in every way delightful, and a great success. On the 15th a special meeting was held, when Miss O'Neill, the Hon. Secretary, gave the assembly a most graphic and interesting "talk" of her visit to the Parent Fellowship in London; of her rambles in Dickensian London, Rochester, Chatham, and Cobham; exhibited the souvenirs of her visit, in the shape of photographs, post cards, books, etc., acquired during her stay in England; and generally gave an impression that she had a fairly good time in Cockneydom. There is every indication that this branch is going to "blow the band." A meeting is arranged, when an evening on Pecksniff, a discussion on Mark Tapley, and readings will form the programme, and a grand entertainment is to take place after Easter.

EDINBURGH AND LEITH BRANCH

On the evening of 22 February, in 5 St. Andrew Square, Mr. William Wyper, Hon. Acting Vice-President, read a paper on the "Peggotty Family." Mr. Wyper treated his subject most successfully, his scholarly and critical essay being much enjoyed and appreciated by the members.

On Thursday evening, 8 March, Mrs. Waddel gave her lecture, "Jacobite Songs," to a large audience of ladies and gentlemen. The subject and the lecturer were alike popular, and the stirring narrative, given with much grace and literary ability, held the interest of the audience throughout. The illustrations were charmingly rendered by Mrs. Anderson. The President occupied the chair.

GRAVESEND, NORTHFLEET, AND DISTRICT BRANCH

This, the newest branch of the Fellowship, was inaugurated at a meeting held at the Town Hall on 27 February, presided over by the Mayor. After the preliminary business of passing rules, Mr. H. A. Waldegrave, Hon.

Secretary, read a most thoughtful and well-considered paper entitled "Why Gravesend should have a branch of the Dickens Fellowship." After dealing with Dickens's place generally in English literature and the nation's regard and affection for his personality and for his writings, Mr. Waldegrave proceeded to show what a possession Dickens was to Kent particularly and Gravesend and the surrounding neighbourhood especially. He made references to most of the places mentioned by Dickens in the district, amongst which was the honeymoon house at Chalk, to which we refer in our notes. There is every reason to believe that the Gravesend Branch will prove one of the most successful and influential.

HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS BRANCH

ON 19 February a meeting was held at Queen's Hotel in aid of the National Dickens Library Fund. Mr. Wilson Crewdson presided, and Mr. Willmott gave a paper on the "Prefaces to the Works of Dickens." Mr. J. W. T. Ley was also present, and addressed the meeting on the general aims of the Fellowship, and also explained the scheme for establishing a National Dickens Library. During the evening Mr. Baker Guy and Miss Violet Row rendered songs.

HULL BRANCH

THE members assembled on 16 February to hear what proved to be a careful exposition of the forepart of *Barnaby Rudge*. The lecturer, Mr. H. B. Browne, M.A., gave some clever delineations of the different characters who lived and moved in the vicinity of the historic "Maypole." His references to the domestic differences of the Varden family, to the whimsical and ever-notable Miggs, and the escapades of Sim Tappertit, were specially humorous, and caused a good deal of merriment. During the evening songs were rendered by Mr. G. W. Haller and Mr. T. R. Broadbent.

On 23 February Miss A. Hall gave an interesting and instructive paper on the evils and maladministration of school-life as depicted by Dickens at Dotheboys Hall. Miss Hall showed how the author in this and in other works exposed the system of "cramming," and of corporal punishment as practised so extensively at that time; and, exaggerated as some of the characters may seem to be, they had the effect of rousing the public spirit against such practices, and paved the way for the educational advantages which we enjoy to-day.

An animated discussion followed in which Messrs. Bond, Brant, Browne, Willingham and the Rev. Geo. Borrow took an active part. Miss Nellie Hall, Mr. E. Hickson, and Miss E. Watson supplied the musical items of the evening.

LEEDS BRANCH

THIS branch gave its annual tea and entertainment to poor slum children of the unemployed on 9 March at St. James's Schoolroom. There were 210 children present, and a very enjoyable time was spent by them. Before leaving each girl was presented with a doll and each boy with a whip and a top. Many of the dolls came from readers of a delightful little sketch which appeared in a local paper entitled "A Fellowship Dolly," an appeal written by Miss Ethel Kidson.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

THE usual fortnightly meeting of the Liverpool Branch took place in the Common Hall, Hackens-hey, on 15 March, under the chairmanship of Mr. T. Formby. The proceedings consisted of the advocacy by several members of their favourite characters in the works of Charles Dickens, and the following took leading parts in the discussion: Miss Haydock (Florence Dombey), Mr. J. R. Ramsden (Agnes Whitfield), Mr. J. Wallace, jun. (Tom Pinch), Mr. Macfarlane (Betsey Trotwood), Mr. Willett (Old Scrooge), and

W. T. Formby (Little Nell). On votes being taken, the audience evinced their preference for Betsey Trotwood.

MELBOURNE BRANCH

THE Dickens birthday celebration was held on 5 February. The Rev. E. Rorke (Vice-President) presided, and delivered an interesting address on the early days of Charles Dickens. By a singular coincidence Mr. A. P. Du Soir, another Vice-President, spoke of the last days of the master, neither of them knowing the subject chosen by the other. Both addresses were full of information, and were received with much gratification.

The other items on the programme were : Recitals by Mr. J. B. Crowther (the Storm and Wreck Scene from *Copperfield*), Miss Windas ("Death of Dora"), Mr. W. A. Windas ("Pecksniff at Todgers's"), readings by Mr. Frank Scrivenor ("Mrs. Nickleby's Proposal"), Mr. Fred. Scrivenor ("Gabriel Grub"), and songs by Mrs. Periman and Miss Rorke.

NOTTS BRANCH

THE monthly meeting of the branch was held in the Mechanics' Institution on Monday, 5 March, when Mr. J. F. Marshall gave an interesting and instructive paper on "Dickensian Art." There was a good attendance, and the paper was much enjoyed, many questions being put to Mr. Marshall, which he readily answered.

A very enjoyable whist drive was held in Marsden's Café on Friday, 16 March. There were twelve tables going, and the following was the prize list: First ladies' (purse and satchel), Mrs. Webster; second ladies' (*Dombey and Son*), Miss Griffin ; first gentlemen's (silver cigarette case), Mr. Burpitt ; second gentlemen's (*Rambles in Dickens Land*), Mr. Edwards. Bronze figures of Dickens characters were given as booby prizes.

ROCHESTER BRANCH

MR. MONTAGUE HARRIS lectured on 8 March on "The Garden City." The Very Rev. the Dean was in the chair, and in the course of his introductory remarks said the subject which was to occupy their attention and to enlist their sympathy and interest was one that was very near to the heart of that great man Charles Dickens. As he (the Dean) understood it the meaning of the Fellowship was to take measures towards the remedy and the amelioration of social evils, and the evils which might be touched by the subject of garden cities would be such evils as overcrowding, the burden of rates, and the absence of recreations. Might he remind the company that the object of the Fellowship was not only to hear words but to take measures? And he expected measures would be opened up that evening such as they could take initial or further steps upon. At the same time they had the treat that evening of listening to words ; and as to what words of literature could do in the way of promoting the remedy and amelioration of evils, he need only remind them it was by Charles Dickens's book *Oliver Twist* that there was improved and ameliorated—almost renovated—the Poor Law of England. He thought the subject of garden cities was appropriate for a Dickens Fellowship meeting.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

ON 8 March Mr. Frank Speaight again visited Sheffield, and gave his recital of *Nicholas Nickleby* to a crowded audience. He was in his best form, and his audience were delighted with his performance from first to last, and were evidently satisfied with his John Browdie. One local paper spoke of "his really good broad Yorkshire."

WEST LONDON SUBURBAN BRANCH

THE March meeting was held at Ealing Municipal Buildings, on 8 March. Readings were given from *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Dombey and Son*

by Mr. Harwood and Mr. Jacobs respectively. Mr. Percy Merriman recited "Sam Weller's Evidence." A delightful paper of a humorous character was read by Mr. Leicester Romayne, entitled "Our Dickensian Aunts." Miss Amy Gwinnett gave a charming recitation of "Scrooge's Nephew's Party." A short paper on "Dickens and Hounslow," by Mr. Percy Thomason, was read by Mr. Chevob. A scene from *The Cricket on the Hearth* was cleverly acted by Mr. Percy Merriman (Caleb Plummer), Miss Norah Bailey (Bertha), Miss Amy Gwinnett (Dot), and Mr. James Prescot (Tackleton). The programme concluded with a humorous chapter from *Pickwick*, read by the Rev. J. W. Gardiner, which caused hearty laughter. Mr. W. Chevob took the chair, in the absence, through illness, of the President, and made an appeal for the National Dickens Library Fund, which met with an excellent response.

WINNIPEG (CANADA) BRANCH

On 25 January the members of this branch were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Kingdon, and a very enjoyable time was spent. Messrs. Weir and Stapleton read some humorous selections from *David Copperfield* and *Pickwick Papers* respectively, after which music and cards occupied attention until late in the evening, when supper was served.

On 8 February was celebrated the ninety-fourth anniversary of Charles Dickens's birth by an annual dinner, when forty sat down to a sumptuous repast. Dr. Charles Woollard presided in a very efficient manner, and after the dinner was over offered a few humorous and timely remarks before proceeding with the toast list. Professor Stanley J. Will, in the course of his eulogy on Charles Dickens, said no writer of his time, or in fact of later times, had been so popular, so humorous, or had caused to be executed through his writings such reforms, or had such a following as Charles Dickens. To-day his memory was as green and his work as fresh as upon the day of his death. Professor Will's speech was listened to with rapt attention. "The Dickens Fellowship" was proposed by Dr. J. R. Jones and responded to by Rev. S. G. Chambers. Dr. Pierce in a very humorous speech proposed "The Ladies," and Rev. J. S. Vallalley responded on their behalf. The Secretary, Mr. W. Stapleton, read a cablegram he had sent to London, also a telegram received from the Toronto Branch, to which a reply was sent.

During the evening a letter of regret for his non-attendance was read from Rev. Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor), the Hon. President, which is well worth repeating here. He says :—

"I regret that owing to a previous engagement it is not possible for me to join the Dickens Fellowship at your most interesting and important function this evening. No people can allow its great names to pass into oblivion or to remain unhonoured as the generations come and go. How infinitely poorer would our English world of letters and the world of our British ethics be but for the work of the man in whose honour you meet to-night! The name of Charles Dickens will always stand among those who speak our English tongue as that of one of the men who have done worthy service for humanity. Not only has he made countless thousands better with the 'wondrous medicine of laughter and tears,' but he has taught England and all who feel her influence that no inhumanity is so inhuman as that toward the poor, the unfortunate, and especially toward little children. And so may the Dickens Fellowship flourish, and may you have a good time to-night."

YORK BRANCH

On 9 March Mr. Speaight gave his recital of *The Pickwick Papers* at the Exhibition Hall, which was filled with a large and appreciative audience, which heartily applauded his performance from start to finish.

THE NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY

Subscription List: Wm. Olsen, 1s.; L.M.M., 1s.; Mrs. W. T. Stead, 1s.; Miss Pearl Stead, 1s.; Mrs. Norton, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Smith, 5s.; Mrs. O'Flanagan, 1s.; Mrs. A. Newcomer, 4s.; Mrs. Kay, 2s.; Miss M. Monger, 1s.; H. Pitman Clarke, 2s. 6d. Total amount received, £29.

Amounts promised: Stockport Branch, £5; Liverpool Branch, £5; Chas. Burton, £1 1s.; W. Teignmouth Shore, £1 1s.; Rev. Canon Benham, £1 1s.; Hon. Spencer Lyttleton, £5; Messrs. Chapman and Hall, £5 5s. Total, £19 8s.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP CONVALESCENT HOME

SUBSCRIPTION LIST

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged	94	11	0	Miss L. Askew*	0	2	6
Ald. Sir W. P. Treloar	5	5	0	S. D. Newton	0	10	6
"Anon."	1	1	0	J. C. Parkinson	5	5	0
Mrs. Scudds	0	2	6	Edmund Dickens*	1	1	0
A. Spalding	5	0	0	J. L. Toole	3	3	0
"S. W. Pickwick"	10	0	0	F. Anstey Guthrie	3	3	0
Mrs. Jane Gray	0	5	0	Coulson Kernahan	0	10	6
Miss F. Innocent	0	2	6	Charles W. Mathews, K.C.	5	5	0
Osborn Walford*	1	1	0	Mrs. Kossell of Gressur	1	0	0
R. W. Askew*	0	2	6	Mrs. Agnes C. Hughes	0	5	0
				Sir Anderson Critchett*	1	1	0

* Annual Subscriptions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

W FOR V

To the Editor of "The Dickensian."

DEAR SIR,—Many have criticized Dickens's substitution of *w* for *v*, and *vice versa*. Talking to a Kentish man the other day about it, he said that he had often observed it to be prevalent amongst the lower classes in Kent.

Many, too—amongst them Mr. Percy FitzGerald—have criticized Dickens's use of "mother-in-law" for "stepmother." Thackeray, I think, is also guilty of this. Surely amongst the uneducated classes we often hear this misnomer, if it be such.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR SCHOMBERG.

RE THE CONVALESCENT HOME SCHEME

DEAR SIR,—I speak without malice, but must protest against the plan as at present put forward to establish the above institution. With the idea generally, all will, of course, most cordially agree. They would not be Dickensians if they did not. But the means suggested to that end do not commend themselves to all of us. With so many institutions throughout the country doing a work precisely what we wish to accomplish, but whose complete utility is so impaired from a lack of adequate funds, would it not be better to join one of these and thus work with machinery already set up rather than spend any funds we may be fortunate enough to collect upon the necessities absolutely requisite if we are to start another home?

Yours very truly,

H. ROBERTS.

CAMDEN COTTAGE, CHRIST CHURCH ROAD,
HAMPSTEAD, 13 *March*, 1906.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—ROSA DARTLE.

QUERIES

"OLD STORIES RE-TOLD."—Can you tell me if "Old Stories Re-told" in *All the Year Round*, 1867, was written by Charles Dickens? The article is unsigned. On Centenary Day I gave fifteen minutes' recitation from it, with my own title, "The Last Moments of Lord Nelson," in Town Hall, Portsmouth. Two reporters came round to ask who was the author, and I could only supply them with the above unsatisfactory information.

HELEN BRINCKMAN.

"THE CHILDREN."—Can you tell me if a very beautiful poem called "The Children," found in Charles Dickens's desk after his death, was written by him? HELEN BRINCKMAN.

MR. SAPSEA'S EFFIGY.—We are told that over Mr. Sapsea's premises in High Street, Cloisterham, was a wooden effigy of his father, "in a curly wig and toga, in the act of selling." Can any reader tell me if this now exists, and in whose possession it is? DURDLES.

MSS. OF DICKENS'S NOVELS.—Is there any record existing of the whereabouts of the various manuscripts of Dickens's novels other than those in the Dyce and Forster Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum? It would be interesting to know who possess the manuscripts of *Pickwick Papers* and of *Nicholas Nickleby*. In the Dickens Exhibition held in London a year or two back a single sheet of the former was to be seen. Does the whole MS. exist? BIBLIOPHILE.

ANSWERS

THE SONG REFERRED TO IN "SKETCHES BY BOZ."—It is, I think, a very happy suggestion that a "Notes and Queries" column should be instituted in *The Dickensian* for the purpose of elucidating obscure points in Dickens, and I beg to offer the following solutions of the queries put by Miss Nash. The song alluded to in *Sketches by Boz* is one written by Thomas Moore (words and music), and the first verse, which is as follows, explains the conservatory allusions :—

Young love lived once in a humble shed
Where roses breathing
And woodbines wreathing
Around the lattice their tendrils spread,
So wild and sweet as the life he led.
His garden flourished,
For young hope nourished
The infant buds with beams and showers,
But lips though blooming must still be fed,
And not e'en love can live in flowers.

It is noticeable perhaps as a reflection of the period of their popularity how fond Dickens is of quoting Moore's lyrics, either in sober seriousness or in ridicule. Dozens of instances could be quoted.

SHAKESPEARE.—With regard to the other query, "Why did Mr. Pickwick's fellow prisoner address him as Shakespeare?" I take it that the passage in chapter 41, which runs thus: "The gentleman *is* awake, hem, Shakespeare!" is merely a mock quotation from the bard made by Zephyr in fun. The deprecatory cough, "hem!" shows this, and the punctuation follows in confirmation.

FRANK KIDSON, *Hon. Secretary*, Leeds Branch.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

April 2. Brixton Branch: Monthly Meeting, at Independent Church, at 8.
Notts Branch: Meeting at Mechanics' Institute.
,, 4. London: Concert and Recital at Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, at 7.30; non-members, 1s.
,, 5. Edinburgh and Leith Branch: "Dickens's Children," by Mr. T. N. Hepburn, at 5 St. Andrew Square, at 8.
Winnipeg Branch: "An Evening with Pickwick," at 506 Langside Street.
,, 6. Manchester Branch: Annual Meeting, at Accountants' Hall, at 7.30.
West London Branch: Monthly Meeting, at Municipal Buildings, Ealing.
Birmingham Branch: Social Gathering, at Great Western Hotel, at 8.
Stockport Branch: "Dickens and Manchester," by Mr. M. Fletcher, Stockport Sunday School, at 8.
Hull Branch: "Mystery of Edwin Drood," by Mr. G. F. Furness, at Albion Rooms, Percy Street, at 8.
,, 7. "The Gentle Art of Letter-writing," by Mr. P. K. Cope at Church Institute, at 7.30. [Church, at 8.
,, 9. Brixton Branch: Reading by Rev. E. Thurston Pain, at Independent
,, 9. Southampton Branch: Monthly Meeting, at Kell Memorial Hall, at 8.
,, 16. Powerstock Branch: Conversazione. [at 7.30.
,, 17. Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society: Business Meeting, at C.M.S. Hall,
,, 18. Forest Gate Branch: Annual Conversazione, at Public Hall, at 8.15.
,, 19. Edinburgh and Leith Branch: "Christmas Books," by Mr. J. Simpson; Reading by Mr. James Wilkie, at 5 St. Andrew Square, at 8.
Winnipeg Branch: "Dickens's Influence for Good," at 506 Langside Street. [Rooms, at 8.
,, 20. Hull Branch: "Dickens and Social Reform," by Mr. F. Bacon, at Albion
,, 26. Blackheath, Lee, and Lewisham Branch: Annual Conversazione, at Obelisk Hall, Lewisham, at 8.
,, 27. Sheffield Branch: Monthly Meeting, at Cutlers' Hall, at 8.
Birmingham Branch: Annual Meeting, at Great Western Hotel, at 8.
Hull Branch: Annual Meeting at Albion Rooms.
,, 28. Brighton Branch: Dramatic Night at Steine House.
Old Folks' Tea at Stamford Hill (see p. 105).
,, 30. Brixton Branch: Conversazione, at Independent Church, at 8.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"The Cheeryble Memorial." *Manchester Guardian*, 3 March.

"In Memoriam." *Fife Herald*, 14 February.

"Is Dickens Read?" *Kent Messenger*, 17 February.

"A Night with Dickens," by Kester, Leeds. *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 10 February.

"Charles Dickens." *Amusements*, March.

"Charles Dickens," by Holbrook Jackson, Leeds. *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 10 March.

"Dickens's Gravesend." *Gravesend Reporter*, 3 March.

"Dickens's Honeymoon. Where was it spent?" *Gravesend Reporter*, 10 March.

"The Cheeryble Brothers." *Manchester Guardian* (Leader), 12 March; (Leader), 13 March.

"Putting the Screw on." *Ideas*, 24 March.

"A Shakespeare Birthday: A Reminiscence of Charles Dickens," by Harry Furniss. *Pall Mall Magazine* for April.

POST CARDS

"Charles Dickens's Waltz," by T. W. A. Comben, on giant post card. Published by the author, 45, Harold Road, Southsea. 3d. each.

The Old Curiosity Shop. 12 cards of characters and scenes from drawings by Phiz and Cattermole. Rochester. J. H. Goldwin. 6d. a packet.